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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**DRUG TRAFFICKER SENTENCED
TO OVER 12 YEARS**

PRESS RELEASE

Susan W. Brooks, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Indiana, announced that Oscar Ceballos, 30, Jasper, Indiana, was sentenced to 12 years and 7 months imprisonment today by U.S. District Judge Richard L. Young following his guilty plea to conspiracy to distribute marijuana, conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine, and conspiracy to launder monetary instruments. This case was the result of a year long investigation by the Drug Enforcement Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Internal Revenue Service, United States Marshal's Service, Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Evansville Police Department, Gibson County Sheriff's Department, Daviess County Sheriff's Department, Vincennes Police Department, and Posey County Prosecutor's Office.

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The investigation resulted in the indictment of 18 defendants in the Southern District of Indiana and dismantled a large-scale methamphetamine distribution network operating in Mexico, Texas, and Indiana. Mexican operatives manufactured the methamphetamine in laboratories in Mexico and smuggled the methamphetamine into the United States through McAllen, Texas. In McAllen, Leonel Moreno took control of the methamphetamine and delivered the methamphetamine to Miguel Quintanilla and his wife, Deneise Quintanilla, in Dallas. Drug couriers then transported the methamphetamine from Dallas to southern Indiana by airplane and automobile. Once the methamphetamine arrived in Indiana, Indiana-based operatives of the Quintanilla Organization broke down the methamphetamine into smaller quantities for distribution. Oscar Ceballos assisted the leader of the distribution network in Indiana, Alfredo Ceballos. The Ceballos brothers caused drug runners to deliver the methamphetamine to street-level dealers throughout southern Indiana for distribution. During the course of the investigation, federal authorities established that the Quintanilla Organization distributed at least 20 pounds of methamphetamine in southern Indiana. The investigation in southern Indiana was coordinated with a parallel investigation into the Quintanilla Organization in Dallas, Texas. During the parallel investigation, DEA-Dallas charged and convicted 22 individuals for methamphetamine trafficking and seized over 100 pounds of methamphetamine. Three defendants received life sentences in the Southern District of

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Indiana for their involvement in this offense. These defendants included Miguel Quintanilla, Deniese Quintanilla, and Alfredo Ceballos.

The marijuana trafficking conspiracy originated in the Goshen and Ligonier, Indiana area in 1996. During this time, Francisco “Pancho” Ramirez and Jose Antonio Trejo-Pasaran trafficked marijuana through Luna’s Lounge in Ligonier, Indiana. Ramirez and Trejo-Pasaran trafficked approximately four tons of marijuana, with a street value of approximately \$8,000,000, through Luna’s Lounge during this time period.

One of the associates of Ramirez and Trejo-Pasaran moved from Goshen, Indiana to Princeton, Indiana in early 1998 to avoid outstanding arrest warrants. Before leaving for Princeton, this individual arranged for Ramirez to supply him with marijuana for distribution in Princeton. During the summer of 1998, law enforcement in northern Indiana raided Luna’s Lounge and arrested Luna. As a result of the raid, Ramirez and Trejo-Pasaran relocated their drug trafficking operation from Ligonier to Princeton. Later in 1998, Ramirez and Trejo-Pasaran established a car dealership known as Ramirez Auto Sales as a front business for the money laundering operation that transported and concealed drug proceeds.

Also in late 1998, associates of Ramirez and Trejo-Pasaran recruited new individuals to transport the marijuana to southern Indiana. These individuals were Jose Hernandez and Jorge Hernandez, who worked for the Tortelleria La Unica business in Monroe, North Carolina. Under their arrangement, Jorge Hernandez obtained the marijuana from Gregorio Chavez or

Cesar Almaguer-Pacina in Texas. Jorge Hernandez then drove the marijuana to North Carolina and then to Indiana. Jorge Hernandez offloaded the marijuana at a horse farm in Haubstadt, Indiana, which co-defendant Vallie Lovell operated. Oscar Ceballos organized the activity at the stash location in Haubstadt and distributed approximately two-hundred pounds of marijuana per shipment to his customers in southern Indiana. From late 1998 through August 10, 2000, these individuals trafficked approximately seven tons of marijuana, with a street value of approximately \$14 million, in southern Indiana. Once the marijuana was sold in southern Indiana, members of the organization obtained automobiles from Ramirez Auto Sales in Princeton, Indiana. Ramirez Auto Sales, run by Ramirez and Trejo-Pasaran, was a front business established by the organization. Ramirez and Trejo-Pasaran purchased used vehicles at auto auctions in the Evansville area in the name of Ramirez Auto Sales. Members of their organization deflated the tires of these used cars that they obtained through Ramirez Auto Sales, stuffed money into the deflated tires, and reinflated the tires. The members of the organization put the cars onto a flatbed truck, which drove the cars and the concealed money to another front car dealership in Progresso, Texas. The drug proceeds and the cars were then transported to Mexico, where the money was maintained and the vehicles sold.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Bradley A. Blackington, who prosecuted the case for the government, Judge Young also imposed 5 years supervised release following Ceballos's imprisonment although he will be deported upon release.

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